

COMMENTARY

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AIRLIFT
Dispatch

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CFC campaign about to end, but there is still time to give

By Col. Rusty Findley
437 AW commander

It was my honor once again to recognize our Diamond Sharp award recipients for October on Tuesday. Among those selected by their respective first sergeants for going above the call of duty are Staff Sgt. Jerry Molina, 437th Supply Squadron; Staff Sgt. Corey Clements, 437th Communications Squadron; Senior Airman Melanie Streeter, 437th Logistics Support Squadron; and Senior Airman Daniel Rose, 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron.

The Airlift/Tanker Association convention got rave reviews from all of our participants. We were acknowledged by Gen. Speedy Martin, commander of the United States Air Forces Europe, and all others that we won the informal "spirit" award for the loudest cheering in support of our young A/TA leader, Capt. Chuck Nesemeier, who was awarded the 1999 Airlift/Tanker Association Outstanding Young Leadership Award. We are very proud of him for being one of only 12 to be honored.

Overall, the convention was everything it was advertised to be and more. There was a record crowd again.

A special thanks to Lt. Col. Dave Rodriguez, president of our Low Country A/TA chapter, for his hard work in organizing the trip, and all those folks who helped him out, to include A/TA members Capt. Jeff Ward, 1st Lt. Grant Meadows, Senior Master Sgt. Moody Blue, Master Sgt. Tracy Brewster and Rose Alexander. The MacDill AFB, Fla. folks who went on the trip with us were very complimentary of our support. I talked to so many folks, especially our young airmen, who learned even more about what this command does, where we stand and where we are headed. It was an excellent conference. See the related article on page 1 of the *Airlift Dispatch* for more information. You can mark your calendar for the next convention in Dallas, Texas, Oct 18-21. See you

there!

The Combined Federal Campaign golf tournament was held Wednesday. Special thanks to Master Sgt. Stephen Dent, 437 LSS, and the men and women of the 437 LSS who helped organize the tournament. We had about 120 folks participate, and as usual, everyone had a great time.

We continue to raise funds for the campaign and hope to have it all wrapped up soon. If you haven't contributed, please contact one of your CFC coordinators...it is not too late to make a difference!

We had a chance to recognize our "best-of-the-best" at the quarterly awards breakfast Wednesday. Receiving awards were: Captain Stan Davis, 15th Airlift Squadron, Senior Company Grade Officer of the Quarter; 2nd Lt. Richard Bentley, 437 CS, Junior CGO of the Quarter; Master Sgt. Tracy Brewster, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Quarter; Tech. Sgt. Donald Eagle, 17th Airlift Squadron, NCO of the Quarter; Senior Airman Forrest Aspinwall, 17 AS; Airman of the Quarter; Senior Airman Jessica Sweet, 437th Supply Squadron, Honor Guard Airman of the Quarter; Rosetta Alexander, 437th Airlift Wing Public Affairs, Civilian of the Quarter, Category I; and Betty Smith, 437th Contracting Squadron, Civilian of the Quarter, Category I.

We held a final tribute to many folks at our Air Expo 2000 recognition party Wednesday in the Charleston Club. This was our final tribute to those individuals who worked so hard to put on such a great air show for the public. We had a great turnout for the show and it was evident that the many months of planning and preparation were key in the show's success. Thanks again for all your hard work!

On Monday and Tuesday, we had the opportunity to process about 258 people and their equipment for an exercise deployment to Saudi Arabia. The exercise proved to be a valuable learning experi-



Photo by Capt. Tracy Velino

Col. Rusty Findley, 437th Airlift Wing commander, talks with Capt. Lenny Richoux, 437 AW executive officer, aboard a C-17 while on the ground at MacDill AFB, Fla., on the way to the Airlift/Tanker Association convention. Findley just finished as the pilot for the first leg of the trip.

ence for everyone. It has been a while since we've deployed a large number of people. I personally learned a lot. With the constant changeover of people in the wing and our high operations tempo, it was helpful to practice a mass deployment exercise. We've got some things to work on, but I'm confident we're up to the task. I appreciate everyone's hard work, attention to detail and safety throughout the exercise. This was good practice for our upcoming mobility exercise in January.

I would like to thank our project officers for the many visits from last week. I saw Gen. John W. Handy, Vice Chief of Staff of Headquarters U.S. Air Force, at the A/TA convention. He was still praising us about his recent visit with Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Bagnall, Commander in Chief, Strike Command, Royal Air Force (United Kingdom). Thanks to project officers Maj. Alex Bays and 1st Lt. Dan Dobbels of the 17 AS and our great protocol staff for their hard work on this visit.

A special kudo also to Capt. John Glassell, 437th Maintenance Squadron, for his hard work in arranging base tours for about 100 people attending the DOD Maintenance Symposium in Charleston. Capt. Jake Verhoef, 437th Logistics Group Quality Assurance, also did a superb job in taking care of Mr. Peter

Steffes, a staff member on the Subcommittee on Military Readiness, House Armed Services Committee, during his recent visit to the base.

Brig. Gen. Jerry Black, 315th Airlift Wing commander, and I are pretty excited about our upcoming civic leader tour Wednesday and Thursday. We plan to take approximately 40 local civic leaders to Keesler AFB, Miss., and Patrick AFB, Fla. They will get a chance to see and experience the C-17 first-hand and learn more about the great men and women who make up the premier airlift wings on the face of the planet. We're doing our part to get the word out and show these folks what we do. Our hope is that we'll make some firm progress toward turning Charleston into an "Air Force" town by influencing these "movers and shakers" in the local community.

As we near the holidays, we need to look out for one another. As the number of social engagements increase and the stresses of the holidays approach, we should apply the concepts of operational risk management in all our off-duty activities. Try to "pre-flight" all your activities to minimize injuries or costly mistakes. You are the wing's greatest resource and I want everyone to be safe, healthy and happy! It's great to be a member of this outstanding team!